

R 260444Z FEB 97
FM AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
SECSTATE WASHDC 0049
INFO AMEMBASSY VILNIUS
AMEMBASSY TALLINN
AMEMBASSY RIGA
CIS COLLECTIVE
MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK

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SUBJECT: THE SUPREMACY OF "STATE POWERS"

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SUMMARY

1. THE LOCAL CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR OF SVERDLOVSK AND THE MAYOR OF YEKATERINBURG IS MORE THAN A PERSONAL DISPUTE, REVEALING AS IT DOES A FUNDAMENTAL RUSSIAN DISTINCTION BETWEEN "STATE POWERS" AND "LOCAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION" THAT IS OFTEN LOST IN TRANSLATION. FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE, DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL DO NOT CONFER A LEGITIMACY TO EXECUTE MANY OF THE GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED. THE LATTER ARE CONSIDERED "STATE POWERS," INHERENT TO THE FEDERAL AND OBLAST LEVELS, BUT ONLY DELEGATED TO MUNICIPALITIES AT THE PLEASURE OF THE "STATE." MANY REPUBLICS AND OBLASTS IN EFFECT VIEW THE DEVOLUTION OF THE FORMERLY CENTRALIZED "STATE POWERS" FROM MOSCOW TO THEM AS SIMPLY MULTIPLYING THE NUMBER OF "KREMLINS" IN EXISTENCE, NOT CHANGING THE NATURE OF THIS POWER OR GIVING IT TO THE PEOPLE. THE MUNICIPALITIES ARE CONTESTING THIS CONCEPT, BUT ARE USUALLY PLAYING FROM A WEAKER HAND. THE OUTCOME OF THIS STRUGGLE WILL TO A LARGE PART DETERMINE THE FATE OF TRUE DEMOCRACY IN RUSSIA. END SUMMARY.

A MISLEADING PREMISE

2. THE ONGOING DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER FROM MOSCOW IS OFTEN SEEN AS A CONTINUING RIPPLE THAT IS FINALLY REACHING TO THE LOWEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. THE PROCESS OF ELECTING OFFICIALS AT EVERY LEVEL IS OFTEN ASSUMED TO BE SOMEWHAT IN ACCORD WITH THE AMERICAN VIEW THAT GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY SHOULD REST AT THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE, WHERE THE ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE MOST RESPONSIBLE TO THE PEOPLE. THE RUSSIAN FEDERAL AND OBLAST LAWS PROVIDING FOR THIS LOCAL DEMOCRACY USE THE TERM "MESTNO-SAMOUPRAVLENIYE," WHICH IS PRECISELY TRANSLATED AS "LOCAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION" BUT OFTEN MISTAKENLY ASSUMED TO MEAN "LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT," A VERY DIFFERENT THING INDEED.

3. MANY OF THE BASIC PREMISES OF THE ABOVE RUSSIAN CONCEPT OF GOVERNMENT ARE REFLECTED IN AMERICAN PRACTICE. THE IDEA OF "STATE POWERS" WHICH DO NOT, INDEED CANNOT, EXIST AT ALL THREE LEVELS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT--FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL--IS SEEN IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL POWER TO RAISE ARMIES AND ORGANIZE THE MILITIA. THE CONCEPT THAT ALL MUNICIPALITIES ARE CONSTRUCTS OF STATE LEGISLATURES IS ANOTHER SHARED PREMISE. THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE IN ALMOST EVERY CASE, HOWEVER, EVEN WHERE THE BASIC AMERICAN AND RUSSIAN CONCEPTS ARE SIMILAR, IS THE FAR MORE SWEEPING AUTHORITY ACCORDED TO THE UPPER LEVELS OF RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT, NOT BECAUSE THE EXERCISE OF THIS AUTHORITY MAY BE MORE EFFECTIVE THERE BUT BECAUSE THAT IS WHERE THE AUTHORITY IS HELD TO COME FROM. POLITICAL POWER IN RUSSIA DOES NOT, AND NEVER HAS, ORIGINATED FROM THE BOTTOM, AS IN

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE WHERE CITIES MAY PREDATE STATES AND STATES PREDATE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. IN THE RUSSIAN SENSE, ELECTIONS THUS DO NOT DELEGATE THE POWER INHERENT IN THE PEOPLE TO THE VARIOUS LAYERS OF GOVERNMENT, BUT MERELY CONFER A LEGITIMACY TO THE ELECTEES TO EXERCISE CERTAIN "STATE POWERS" THAT ALREADY EXIST, INDEPENDENT OF THE PEOPLE AND DERIVED FROM THE EXISTENCE OF STATE ITSELF. IN THIS SENSE, THESE "STATE POWERS" DO NOT, AND CANNOT, EXIST AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE STATE

14. HISTORICALLY, MOSCOVY HAD DEVELOPED AS THE EXTREME EXAMPLE OF THE CENTRALLY-ORGANIZED STATE. THE CZAR WAS NOT ONLY THE RULER OF HIS EMPIRE BUT ITS "GOSUDAR'," OR LITERAL "SOVEREIGN" OWNER, EXERCISING "GOSUDARSTVENNIYE VLASTI" ("GOSVLASTI" FOR SHORT) OR "STATE POWERS." THESE POWERS REFLECTED THE AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY INHERENT IN A SOLE PROPRIETOR, WHICH COULD NEITHER BE FURTHER DIVIDED NOR ALIENATED AND WHICH DID NOT REPRESENT ANY AUTHORITY OR LEGITIMACY CONFERRED UPON THE PROPRIETOR BY ANYONE ELSE. THESE "STATE POWERS" HAD ONE ORIGIN, AND WERE LITERALLY SOVEREIGN. THE COMMUNIST STRUCTURE THAT FOLLOWED EXHIBITED IN MANY RESPECTS THE SAME THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SUPREMACY OF THE CENTER.

THE TREND TOWARDS REGIONALIZATION OF "STATE POWERS"

15. RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN SOMETHING NOT EXISTENT IN RUSSIA SINCE THE TIME OF INDIVIDUAL PRINCIPALITIES OR THE ANOMALOUS CITY-STATE OF NOVGOROD, I.E., AN INDEPENDENT SOURCE OF "STATE POWERS" OUTSIDE OF THE CAPITAL, BE IT MOSCOW OR ST. PETERSBURG. THIS INITIALLY OCCURRED DE FACTO, BUT HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, IN MANY CASES, DE JURE. SVERDLOVSK OBLAST, FOR EXAMPLE, CLAIMS "STATE POWERS" IN ITS CHARTER, AND POINTS TO THE AGREEMENTS SIGNED BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND SVERDLOVSK OBLAST IN JANUARY 1996 AS A RECOGNITION OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY BY MOSCOW. IT CAN THUS LEGITIMATELY CLAIM THAT IT ITSELF NOW HAS THE ATTRIBUTE OF "STATE POWERS" FORMALLY ONLY HELD BY CZAR OR COMMUNIST CENTRAL COMMITTEE. CURRENT RUSSIAN FEDERALISM, IN THIS SENSE, IS THE REPRODUCTION OF THE FORMER CENTRALIZED "STATE POWERS" OF THE KREMLIN IN THE EIGHTY-NINE "SUBJECTS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION," BE THEY OBLASTS, REPUBLICS, OR AUTONOMOUS OKRUGS.

16. WHILE MOSCOW AND THE REPUBLICS OR OBLASTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MANY AND VARIED TREATIES NOW SIGNED BETWEEN THEM, MAY HAVE DIVIDED THESE "STATE POWERS" BETWEEN THEM, THE REPUBLICS AND OBLASTS ARE NOT ABOUT TO FURTHER DIVIDE IT WITH THE MUNICIPALITIES. THEY WILL DELEGATE CERTAIN "GOSUDARSTVENNIYE POLNOMOCHIYE" OR "STATE PLENETARY POWERS" TO THE MUNICIPALITIES BY DECREE OF THE GOVERNOR OR BY LAW OF THE OBLAST LEGISLATURE, BUT CAN QUITE AS EASILY TAKE THEM AWAY. "LOCAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION," FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, THUS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE SUBORDINATE MUNICIPALITIES HAVE ANY INHERENT "STATE POWERS" OF THEIR OWN. THE LATTER CAN MERELY USE THEIR DISCRETION IN THE EXECUTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OBLAST'S "STATE POWERS."

SVERDLOVSK'S "KREMLIN" ON THE RIVER ISET

17. THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN GOVERNOR EDUARD ROSSEL OF SVERDLOVSK AND MAYOR ARKADIY CHERNETSKIY OF YEKATERINBURG HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF PREVIOUS CABLES (REFTELS). THIS PREVIOUSLY HAD SEEMED TO US MORE OF A CONFLICT OF PERSONALITIES THAN OF IDEOLOGIES, AS THEIR TWO PARTY PROGRAMS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY SIMILAR. IF ONE INCLUDES THE CONCEPTUAL DISTINCTION NOTED ABOVE, HOWEVER, THE CONFLICT TAKES ON A DIFFERENT, MUCH DEEPER NATURE. THAT THIS

CONCEPT OF "STATE POWERS" IS INDEED DRIVING THE OBLAST IS APPARENT IN A WHOLE SERIES OF RECENT ACTIONS.

18. ONE ASPECT OF THIS DIVISION OF SOVEREIGNTY IS THE APPOINTMENT OF MANY SENIOR FEDERAL OFFICIALS, WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO BE NOMINATED BY THE FEDERAL AUTHORITIES IN AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNOR AND CONFIRMED BY THE OBLAST LEGISLATURE. (COMMENT: SHADES OF THE LONG STRUGGLE BETWEEN SECULAR MONARCHS AND THE PAPACY OVER THE APPOINTMENT OF BISHOPS. END COMMENT) THIS LIST INCLUDES THE MVD CHIEF, AND LOTS OF GRUMBLING WAS RECENTLY HEARD IN THE LEGISLATURE WHEN A DEPUTY MINISTER FROM MOSCOW CAME OUT AND PRESENTED THE NEW OBLAST UVD HEAD BEFORE ANY VOTE ON HIM WAS UNDERTAKEN IN THE OBLAST LEGISLATURE. EVEN THE FEDERAL OFFICIALS WHO CAN BE APPOINTED BY MOSCOW WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE OBLAST, SUCH AS THE MILITARY DISTRICT COMMANDER OR THE FSB CHIEF, HAVE BEEN COOPTED BY BEING INCORPORATED IN THE GOVERNOR'S OWN "SECURITY COUNCIL."

19. THE OBLAST'S CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY WAS CLEAR WHEN THE DUMA PASSED A LAW, SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR ON 24 DECEMBER 1996, "ON THE CONFERRING OF DELEGATED STATE PLENETARY POWERS TO THE ORGANS OF SELF-ADMINISTRATION OF MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES IN SVERDLOVSK OBLAST," IN WHICH IT LAID OUT EIGHT SPECIFIC AREAS IN WHICH THE MUNICIPALITIES CAN PARTICIPATE WITH THE OBLAST IN PROGRAMS ON THE USE OF LAND; THE USE OF MINERAL RIGHTS; ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION; EDUCATION; CULTURE; PUBLIC HEALTH; THE : THE OBLAST PROGRAM ON THE USE OF LAND; .

110. PERTINENT EXAMPLES OF THIS LINE OF THINKING WERE REVEALED IN THE OBLAST DUMA'S DEBATE ON 17-18 FEBRUARY ON THE LAW CREATING THE EASTERN "OKRUG," ONE OF THE SIX NEW PREFECTURAL DISTRICTS LONG DESIRED BY THE GOVERNOR AS A STATED MEANS OF BRINGING THE OBLAST ADMINISTRATION CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE AND OF MAKING IT MORE EFFICIENT. THE DRAFT WAS SURPRISINGLY DEFEATED, WITH SOME LOCAL DEPUTIES SAYING THAT THE PEOPLE IN THE AREA NEITHER UNDERSTOOD NOR FELT THE NEED FOR SUCH A NEW BUREAUCRATIC ENTITY AND SUGGESTING THAT A REFERENDUM SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. THE SPEAKER OF THE DUMA, VLACHESLAV SURGANOV, IN TURN STATED THAT THE NEED FOR THIS NEW LEVEL OF OBLAST GOVERNMENT STEMMED FROM THE FACT THAT THE "ORGANS OF LOCAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION DO NOT CORRELATE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH THE OBLAST ADMINISTRATION AND SHOW TOO MUCH INITIATIVE."

111. THE REACH OF THE OBLAST POWERS WAS EVIDENCED IN THE OPINIONS OF "REVIVAL OF THE URALS" DEPUTY VENIAMIN GOLUBITSKIY, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DUMA COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC POLICY, BUDGET, FINANCES, AND TAXES, WHO SAID THAT THE LAW WAS ABOUT "IMPROVING THE STRUCTURE OF THE "UPRAVLENIYE" (DIRECTION OR ADMINISTRATION) OF THE OBLAST. JUST AS WE (THE DUMA) DO NOT DISCUSS CONCRETE TASKS GIVEN BY THE HEAD OF THE OBLAST TO HIS DEPUTIES BECAUSE THEY ARE AN INTERNAL MATTER OF THE OBLAST, BY THE SAME TOKEN WE SHOULD NOT DISCUSS THIS. AND WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE? WE ARE DISCUSSING THE 'POLNOMOCHIYE' (AUTHORITY) WHICH THE OBLAST ANYWAY POSSESS. IT IS ONLY A QUESTION OF HOW THIS 'POLNOMOCHIYE' MATERIALIZES." (COMMENT: THE HEAD OF THE DUMA BUDGET COMMITTEE CANNOT BE TALKING ABOUT THE CREATION OF GOVERNMENT POSITIONS, SINCE HE HAS TO PAY FOR THEM, AND LOGICALLY CAN ONLY MEAN THE AUTHORITY INHERENT IN THE GOVERNOR'S POSSESSION OF "STATE POWERS." END COMMENT.) GOLUBITSKIY THOUGHT THE PROPOSED IDEA OF A REFERENDUM ON THE NEW PREFECTURAL DISTRICT RIDICULOUS, SINCE THE PEOPLE WERE UNINFORMED ON SUCH ISSUES.

112. THE NORTHERN PREFECTURE HAS ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED, AND A GUBERNATORIAL DECREE WAS ISSUED STATING THAT ITS STAFF WOULD CONSIST OF 49 PERSONNEL, TO BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE STAFFS OF THE MUNICIPALITIES CONTAINED THEREIN. WHEN THE CG ASKED YEKATERINBURG MAYOR CHERNETSKIY HOW THE GOVERNOR COULD SO TRANSFER MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL, THE MAYOR REPLIED "HE CAN'T.." ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE OBLAST EXECUTIVE'S EXERCISE OF "STATE POWERS" IN THE PERSONNEL AREA WAS A GUBERNATORIAL DECREE DECLARING THAT THE HEADS OF AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENTS OF MUNICIPALITIES AND RAIONS, CLEARLY ORGANS OF LOCAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION, WERE NO

LONGER TO BE APPOINTED BY THE ELECTED MAYORS OR RAION HEADS OF ADMINISTRATION, BUT BY THE GOVERNOR.

¶13. THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF THIS THINKING IS THE OBLAST GOVERNMENT'S DRAFT OF A LAW ON THE STATUS OF YEKATERINBURG AS THE OBLAST CAPITAL. MAYOR CHERNETSKIY, AS A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATURE, SUBMITTED HIS OWN VERSION. THE DUMA COMMITTEE CONSIDERING THESE TWO VERSIONS HAS PRODUCED A COMPROMISE, NOTING THAT IT USED CHERNETSKIY'S DRAFT AS THE MORE WORKABLE BASIS. THE GOVERNOR'S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE DUMA HAS HOWEVER DECLARED THAT THE GOVERNOR WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY COMPROMISE.

¶14. THE KEY ITEM IN THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL IS THAT, BECAUSE OF YEKATERINBURG'S STATUS AS THE "ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER OF THE OBLAST," ITS MAYOR SHOULD BE PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR AND ELECTED BY THE CITY DUMA. IN ADDITION, THIS STATUS MEANS THAT MANY OF THE FUNCTIONS NORMALLY ASCRIBED TO LOCAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION MUST NOW BE CONSIDERED AS "STATE POWERS," TO BE EXECUTED BY THE EXECUTIVE ORGAN OF THE "CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT."

¶15. CHERNETSKIY HAS ALSO BEEN UNDER ATTACK OF LATE BY A NUMBER OF THE OFFICIALS AND DUMA MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNOR'S PARTY FOR BEING TOO CONCERNED ABOUT POLITICS AND NOT PAYING ENOUGH ATTENTION TO THE GOOD HUSBANDRY OF THE CITY. (COMMENT: THIS IDEA THAT THE MAYOR SHOULD BE A NON-POLITICAL FIGURE IS A CLEAR CONFIRMATION OF THE SUBORDINATE ROLE FORESEEN FOR THE ORGANS OF LOCAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION, HOLDING AS IT DOES THAT POLITICS IS SOMETHING APPROPRIATE ONLY AT THE OBLAST LEVEL, THE TRUE REPOSITORY OF POLITICAL POWER. THE DE FACTO REALITY OF THIS, FELT BY VOTERS IN THEIR BONES, MAY WELL ACCOUNT FOR THE LATTER'S RELATIVE INDIFFERENCE TO MANY ELECTIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. END COMMENT.)

UDMURTIA'S "KREMLIN" ON THE RIVER IZH

¶16. THE UDMURT REPUBLIC IS GOVERNED BY A "GOSSOVIET," OR STATE SOVIET, THE CHAIRMAN OF WHICH, ALEXANDR A. VOLKOV SERVES AS THE HEAD OF THE REPUBLIC GOVERNMENT. THE STATE SOVIET ATTEMPTED TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE OF "STATE POWERS" AND "LOCAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION" IN APRIL 1996 BY SIMPLY PASSING A LAW ABOLISHING THE POSITIONS OF THE ELECTED MAYORS. ALL OF THESE MAYORS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ANATOLIY I. SALTYKOV, THE MAYOR OF THE CAPITAL, ISHEVSK, ACCEPTED THE LAW AND BECAME GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED OFFICIALS. DURING THE CG'S VISIT TO UDMURTIA LAST NOVEMBER, THERE WERE THUS TWO MAYORS OF ISHEVSK, THE OLD POPULARLY-ELECTED ONE, SALTYKOV, AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED ONE, YURIY S. PITKEVICH, WITH THE CITY GOVERNMENT AT A STANDSTILL. VOLKOV AND PITKEVICH, OVER THE USUAL SUMPTUOUS LUNCH, ATTEMPTED TO CONVINCE THE CG THAT DEMOCRACY HAD TO BE ESTABLISHED ONLY SLOWLY IN THE REPUBLIC, AND THAT THE UDMURT POPULATION WAS ONLY READY TO ELECT OFFICIALS AT THE SUB-MUNICIPAL LEVEL. THE SMALL SIZE OF THE REPUBLIC, AND THE DOMINANT POSITION OF ISHEVSK, MEANT THAT A UNIFIED GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO THE NECESSARY DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMY WAS IMPOSSIBLE WITH AN ELECTED MAYOR IN THE CAPITAL WHO PURSUED HIS OWN POLICIES.

THE CITIES FIGHT BACK

¶17. THIS VIEW OF THE SUPREMACY OF THE REPUBLICS AND OBLASTS IS NOT SURPRISINGLY REJECTED BY MUNICIPAL LEADERS, WHO ARE SEEKING REAL GOVERNMENTAL POWER. SALTYKOV TOOK THE UDMURT REPUBLIC TO THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT IN NOVEMBER, AND EFFECTIVELY WON THE CASE AT THE END OF JANUARY. WHILE THE COURT AGREED THAT THE REPUBLIC HAD THE RIGHT TO STRUCTURE THE LOCAL ORGANS OF SELF-ADMINISTRATION ANY WAY IT WISHED, INCLUDING HAVING APPOINTED HEADS OF ADMINISTRATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, IT STIPULATED THAT ONCE THE PEOPLE OF THESE LOCAL ENTITIES HAD EXPRESSED THE

POPULAR WILL THROUGH ELECTIONS FOR THE THEIR MAYORS OR HEADS OF ADMINISTRATION, FUTURE CHANGES COULD ONLY BE EFFECTED THROUGH POPULAR WILL. THE EXISTING POSITIONS COULD THUS ONLY BE ABOLISHED BY A REFERENDUM, NOT BY ANY ACTION OF THE STATE COUNCIL. (COMMENT: THIS CAVEAT WAS SO HARD TO DISCERN FROM THE REPUBLIC-CONTROLLED MEDIA THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT LATER HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE TO "CLARIFY" THE OFFICIAL REPUBLIC INTERPRETATION. END COMMENT) THE STATE COUNCIL IN UDMURTIA IS NOW LOOKING AT HOLDING REFERENDUMS ON ABOLISHING THE OFFICES OF ELECTED MAYORS, AND APPEARS TO BE CONFIDENT THAT IT COULD WIN IN MOST CASES.

¶18. THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT'S DECISION WAS SEEN AS A GREAT VICTORY BY THE CITY OF YEKATERINBURG. ONE OF ITS DEPUTY MAYORS, ALEXANDR G. KOBERNICHENKO, COMMENTED TO THE CG THAT THE DECISION HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED JUST BEFORE A MEETING OF THE "UNION OF CITIES OF RUSSIA" ATTENDED BY CHERNOMRYDIN AND CHUBAIS. KOBERNICHENKO NOTED THAT THE UNION, WHICH IS AN ORGANIZATION OF THE LARGER CITIES OF RUSSIA, IS APPARENTLY NOW BEING SEEN BY THE CENTER AS A USEFUL ALLY. ITS MEMBERS CONTAIN SOME 48 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S VOTERS AND, UNLIKE MANY OF THE OBLAST GOVERNORS AND REPUBLIC HEADS, THE CITY HEADS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN BRINGING ABOUT ANY GREAT DIMINUTION OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE FEDERATION. IN ANY GIVEN INSTANCE, HOWEVER, THE CITIES ARE GENERALLY PLAYING THE WEAKER HAND. IN YEKATERINBURG, THE MAYOR HAS TO CONTINUALLY FEND OFF ATTACKS INITIATED BY THE OBLAST, INCLUDING SUCH EXTREMES AS THE GOVERNOR'S SECURITY COUNCIL INVESTIGATION OF THE CITY TELEPHONE RATES IN THE NAME OF "ECONOMIC SECURITY."

COMMENT

¶19. THE OUTCOME OF THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER BETWEEN THE OBLASTS AND REPUBLICS AND THE MUNICIPALITIES AND THEIR EQUIVALENT RAIONS, MOST CLEARLY REPRESENTED IN SVERDLOVSK AND UDMURTIA BUT ONGOING IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER IN MOST OF THE SUBJECTS OF THE FEDERATION IN OUR CONSULAR DISTRICT, WILL HAVE A DECISIVE EFFECT ON THE EVOLUTION OF A REAL DEMOCRACY IN THE REGION. IF THE CONCEPT OF THE SUPREMACY OF "STATE POWERS" PREVAILS, THE LOCUS OF POWER MAY HAVE CHANGED BUT ITS NATURE WILL BASICALLY REFLECT THE CENTURIES-OLD CONCEPT OF A SOCIETY RUN FROM THE TOP DOWN. THE VIEW FROM THE URALS IS THAT, IN THIS RESPECT, ONE OUGHT TO BE ROOTING FOR THE MUNICIPALITIES.

STEERS